THE FEDERAL SPOTLIGHT

Flemming Will Become Special Personnel Aide

By JOSEPH YOUNG
Star Staff Writer

President-elect Nixon will revert to the practice of the Eisenhower administration and have his own special assistant on federal personnel matters in the White House.

His assistant will be Harry S. Flemming, who during the transition period has been Nixon's chief talent scout in filling top administration jobs.

Under the new system, the chairman of the Civil Service Commission no longer will be the special assistant on personnel to the President, as outgoing CSC chairman John Macy to President Johnson, nor will the chairman handle patronage appointments.

Flemming, 28, is the son of former CSC commissioner Arthur Flemming, who served during the Roosevelt and Truman administrations and later was secretary of health, education and welfare under Eisenhower. The younger Flemming will play a vital role in federal employe matters.

He will advise Nixon on government employe legislation, policy matters and personnel programs, as well as act as the top White House man on political patronage matters.

Harry Flemming, a vice president of an electronic corporation, is a member of the Alexandria City Council and is known as the most successful Republican vote-getter in Alexandria's history. He is considered a progressive Republican.

Oldtimers who recall his father's brilliant career as CSC commissioner and HEW secretary are sure that Harry Flemming will add luster to the Flemming name in his new role as personnel adviser to Nixon.

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EARLIER RETIREMENT— The chairman of the House Civil Service Retirement subcommittee has sponsored legislation to provide for optional retirement for a government employe when his combined age and years of federal service total 80.

The bill introduced by Rep. Dominick Daniels, D-N.J., would provide full annuities under these conditions if an employe were at least 55 years old.

If the employe were younger than 55 years and had a combined total of 80 or more, the annuity would be reduced by one percent for each year under 55.

At present government workers may retire optionally on full annuities when they reach 55 after 30 years service. Employes between age 55 and 60 can retire optionally only if they have at least 30 years service.

Daniels' bill would permit many more government employes to retire optionally at an earlier age.

For example, at present an employe at age 57 with 23 years of service has to wait until age 60 in order to retire. Under Daniels' bill he would be able to retire immediately on a full annuity.

Another example is an employe aged 52 with 29 years of service. At present he would have to wait until age 55 before he could retire. Under Dainels' bill he could retire immediately, with an annuity cut of 3 percent.

The outlook of Dainels' bill is not too promising this year. But the very fact that he, as chairman of the House Civil Service Retirement subcommittee, sponsored it, gives the measure at least a chance of ultimate passage sometime in the future.

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HEALTH PREMIUMS — Dainels, who also is chairman of the House Civil Service Insurance subcommittee, sponsored a bill to have the government eventually pay the entire cost of federal employe health insurance premiums. At present the government pays less than 30 percent of the cost, with employes paying the rest.

Under the Dainels bill, the government starting July 1 would pay 50 percent of the total health insurance premiums' cost, 75 percent starting July 1, 1970, and 100 percent starting July, 1971.

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RETIREMENT FINANCING — Dainels also sponsored a bill identical to the one that passed the House last year, which would strengthen the financing of the Civil Service retirement system. The bill died last year when the Senate failed to act.

In the process of strengthening the retirement fund's financing, the government eventually would pay an additional $1 billion a year, and federal employes' 6½ percent-of-salary contributions to the fund would be raised to 7 percent. Employes would get higher annuity benefits because of credit for unused sick leave and computation of their pen-[illegible]ns on the basis of their [illegible]three-year average salary [illegible]d of the present high-

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RETIREES' RAISES — The Bureau of Labor Statistics' November price index has risen to 3.7 percent over the index that resulted in the previous annuity increase for retired government workers. This means that, under the formula, if the index remains higher by 3 percent or more for December (and this is regarded as a foregone conclusion) retirees will get an annuity increase effective March 1.

The amount of the increase will depend on the December index and should be at least 4 percent, probably a little more. Present government workers who retire on or before Feb. 28 also will receive the annuity increase.